

VA**U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs**

News Release

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Washington, D.C. -- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has awarded a contract to QTC Medical Group, Inc., based in Diamond Bar, Calif., to conduct medical examinations of some individuals who have filed claims for VA disability benefits.

QTC will begin conducting the medical evaluations May 1 as part of a VA pilot program authorized last year by Congress under Public Law 104-275. The program will evaluate the effect of contracting for medical examinations from non-VA medical sources to determine eligibility for VA disability compensation and pension benefits.

VA regional benefits offices in Atlanta, Boston, Los Angeles, Salt Lake City, San Diego, Wichita, Kan., and Winston-Salem, N.C., will participate in the pilot program with a portion of the examinations for these offices performed by QTC. The company, which has extensive experience conducting disability medical examinations for governmentwide programs and for insurance disability claims, will conduct the examinations at local medical clinics in these areas. VA is providing the necessary resources to QTC to teach its medical examiners the required protocol for a VA compensation and pension exam.

VA compensation is paid to veterans with service-connected disabilities. Pension benefits are paid to low-income veterans who served in wartime and have non-service-connected disabilities.

VA will provide a report to Congress on the results of the pilot project in October 1999. The report will evaluate the impact that the pilot had on the quality, timeliness, and cost of the examination process. Additionally, the report will include an assessment of the overall impact on service to veterans, including the results of customer service surveys.